



Organizational Safety Solutions

Walk Like a Penguin

Avoid Slips and Falls on Ice and Snow

Sometimes, it is best to learn from the experts. Who is more of an expert at walking on snow and ice than a penguin? When that first snow or sleet arrives, remember to Walk Like a Penguin!



Keep your arms free and outstretched (not in your pockets) to maintain balance. Point your feet out slightly, take short steps and shuffle to increase stability. Why does this work? Spreading your feet and pointing them outward helps maintain your center of gravity, and walking flatfooted increases the amount of footwear surface in contact with the ground. Penguins are not known for their speed, so don't rush. You very seldom see penguins-on their phones, which means they are paying attention to the walking surface in front of them.

Use handrails and walk in designated walkways, avoid off-sidewalk short cuts which don't receive maintenance! *Always assume dark wet areas on pavements are black ice.*

Report hazardous walking conditions. No matter how well the snow and ice is removed from parking lots or sidewalks, pedestrians will still encounter slippery surfaces in winter. Dew or water vapor can freeze on cold surfaces, forming a nearly invisible layer of black ice. Prevent a co-worker's fall—notify the maintenance department of any unsafe conditions you identify.

When exiting a vehicle, look before you exit, and use the truck driver's trick: three-point contact. Always keep three limbs firmly attached to the vehicle. Hold onto the doorframe and plant both feet firmly on the ground as you exit.

Check Your Tread



Don't wait for the snow to fly to make sure your footwear is appropriate for inclement weather. It is a good practice to make sure your winter footwear is ready before you face frost, snow and ice. Check your tread. Is it going to provide the traction you will need for the changing conditions? Just like the tread on tires, the tread on your winter walking boots wears down over time. When your tread is worn down or you are wearing shoes not meant for winter weather, you slip and slide—just like you would if you were driving on bald tires. So, get your boots out and check the tread! Make sure you are wearing rubber soles and non-slip tread. When expecting exposure to snow, a deeper tread, such as lug soles will provide more traction. High heels, “croc” rubber-style shoes and leather bottomed shoes do not perform well in slippery conditions.



If a significant exposure to snow and ice is expected, consider the use of traction devices. These usually consist of stretchy material or Velcro that attaches to your footwear and provides studs or other materials that increase the amount of friction interface between surfaces. This is especially important for workers who are sent outdoors to remove snow

and ice, making it safer for others. You still need to use caution but think of it now as if you are a polar bear with claws!

Get the Message Out

If your facility is subject to pedestrian traffic, you know how difficult it is to control the behavior of your visitors. Consider prominent signage to advertise the proper means of ambulation during winter months. Where appropriate, have staff offer to carry items for seniors or others who may have ambulation challenges.

Avoid Falls – Do the Penguin Walk

- Knees relaxed
- Toes pointed out
- Short steps
- Slow and deliberate
- Hands free for good balance
- Walk flatfooted
- Wear footwear that provides traction
- Step down, not out from curbs
- Carry only what you can (consider a backpack)
- Ice + Heels = Spills



The Penguin Walk Works

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact your local PMA Risk Control Consultant.

IMPORTANT NOTICE - The information and suggestions presented by PMA Companies in this Bulletin are for your consideration in your loss prevention efforts. They are not intended to be complete or definitive in discovering or identifying all hazards associated with your business, preventing workplace accidents, or complying with any safety related, or other laws or regulations. You are encouraged to alter them to fit the specific hazards of your business and to have your legal counsel review all of your plans and company policies. PMA Companies and Old Republic Insurance Group does not provide legal advice and the information and suggestions in this Bulletin should not be construed as such.